Doubling the cargo handling capacity

965. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a'fact that his Ministry plans to more than double the current cargo handling capacity of ports from 676 million tonne to 1,500 million tonne in the next five years;

(b) whether it is a fact that his Ministry intends to increase capacity by setting up new ports, upgrading old ports, deepening channels, increasing and strengthening hinterland connectivity and improving logistical services; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The aggregate cargo handling capacity in the 12 major ports as on 31.3.2006 is 456.20 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) as against which 423.41 million tonnes (MT) were handled in 2005-06. In addition, non-major ports handled about 150 MT in 2005-06. Keeping in view the future growth of the Indian economy, a sizeable expansion in port capacity in India needs to be achieved, both in the major and non-major ports. Towards this goal, various projects for development of berths, deepening of channels, modernization and upgradation of cargo handling equipments, improvement in rail/road connectivity and development of other associated facilities have been taken up for major ports. The non-major ports sector under the State Governments also have to expand significantly.

Ndn-impiementation of BoT projects

966. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Planning Commission's failed attempt at redesigning public-private partnership contracts for roads since January, 2005 has paralysed the Nation's Highway building exercise;

(b) whether it is a fact that apart from roughly 30 projects processed earlier, not a single kilometer of new BoT (Buiid-operate-Transfer) projects have been awarded since early 2005;

(c) if so, the reason therefor, and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to gain momentum for the road projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHR! K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Planning Commission, as the Secretariat for Committee on Infrastructure has published a Model Concession Agreement (MCA) for taking up National Highway Projects through Public Private Partnership (PPP).

(b) and (c) 46 contracts have been awarded since January, 2005 on BOT (Toll)/BOT (Annuity) basis.

(d) The steps taken by the Government to ensure early completion of the projects are given in the Statement.

Statement

The steps taken to ensure early completion of the project

(a) The contracts are regularly monitored at various levels such as by Supervision Consultants/Project Directors, Senior Officers of National, Highways Authority of India. Progress reviews are also held at the level of Chairman, National Highways Authority of India, Secretary, Department of Road Transport and Highways and the Minister, Shipping, Road Transport and Highways.

(b) State Governments have appointed senior officers as nodal officers for resolving problems associated with implementation of the National Highways Development Project such as land acquisition, removal of utilities forest/pollution/environment clearances etc. These nodal officers hold periodic meetings to review the projects and take action to resolve the problems.

(c) A Committee of secretaries has been constituted under Cabinet Secretary to address inter-Ministerial and Centre-State issues such as land acquisition, utility shifting, environment approvals, clearance of Road Over Bridges etc.

(d) The procedure of issue of Land Acquisition notifications has now been simplified. Earlier all the notifications under National Highways Act were vetted by the Ministry of Law. Recently, an amendment has been made in the Allocation of Business Rules by which these notifications are not required to be sent to the Ministry of Law. The Ministry of Law has approved the standard formats of various notifications keeping in view the similar nature of the notifications of Land Acquisition.

(e) To expedite the construction of Road Over Bridges, an officer of the Railways has been posted to National Highways Authority of India to coordinate with Ministry of Railways. Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with M/s IRCON International Limited for construction of some of the Road Over Bridges.

(f) Action has been taken against non-performing contractors and they are not allowed to bid for future projects unless they improve the performance in existing contracts.

(g) Steps have been taken to improve cash flow problems of contractors by granting interest bearing discretionary advance at the request of contractor, release of retention money against bank guarantee of equal amount, deferment of recovery of advances (on interest basis) and relaxation in minimum Interim Payment Certificate (IPC) amount.

Discussions with Road Safety NGOs

967. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have selected some of Road Safety NGOs for discussions; ,

(b) the names of such Road Safety NGOs who have been empanelled, by NHAI;

(c) whether NHAI has avoided any interaction with NGOs who are active and productive;

(d) the criteria used to select such NGOs; and